

**TESTIMONY**

**OF**

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**On behalf of the**

**CITES BUSHMEAT WORKING GROUP**

**Before the**

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON FISHERIES CONSERVATION, WILDLIFE  
AND OCEANS**

**COMMITTEE ON RESOURCES**

**U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**On**

**THE BUSHMEAT TRADE IN AFRCIA**

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**OBSERVATION ON THE BUSHMEAT PROBLEM IN CENTRAL AFRICA: HISTORY AND  
CURRENT STATE**

**SUMMARY**

The massive African equatorial forest, whose inhabitants are of Bantu Pygmy origin, dominates the Central Africa region. This humid tropical forest contains portions of six countries: Cameroon, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, the Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic, and the Democratic Republic

of the Congo. This forest is the second largest humid tropical forest in the world after the Amazon, both in size and its biological wealth. Various expeditions, scientific and other, conducted in the region during the last decade, made apparent the immensity of the biological, ecological and cultural potential of this forest of Central Africa. It is an unequalled refuge for a number of species of fauna and flora, some of which remain to be discovered, while others are threatened with disappearance. In Democratic Republic of the Congo, for example, more than 4,009 species of mammals, 1,086 species of birds, and 1,060 species of fishes have been identified. In the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville), 45 species of reptiles, more than 450 species of mammals, and 600 species have been identified.

This immense natural resource heritage continues to be the principal source of meeting the vital needs of the peoples of the Central African forest. With no pastoral tradition, generations of forest dwellers through myths, beliefs and customs, established sacred rules of management of the resources that are essential to their survival. The rational or sustainable management notion, therefore, is not a new concept for these peoples, who already by tradition were involved in the management and monitoring of such vital activities as fishing, hunting and gathering (*i.e.* mushrooms, caterpillars, and wild fruit). Nevertheless today, all these sacred rules are trampled under foot, on the pretence of modernism and economic development. The subsistence needs of yesterday have yielded to an improper lucrative exploitation of natural resources beyond reasonable limits and most notably, the commerce of bushmeat.

In Central Africa, the bushmeat trade is currently one of the sources of income for many of the inhabitants of forested areas. The development of logging has brought relatively large amounts of money to formerly isolated areas and human populations that were once exempt of excessive consumption habits. Poachers and game traders now use logging roads and other transportation means to bring illegally captured meat to market in the cities. The thousands of workers and their families, employed by the forestry companies, constitute a potential market for bushmeat, especially as logging companies usually prefer to ignore their employees' protein needs. This situation is complicated and enhanced by the armed conflicts of the region and the accompanying proliferation of weapons that are now used for poaching.

The commerce of bushmeat is suddenly the principal income source for a good number of the inhabitants in areas that still hold wildlife. The conditions that favor the development of this activity are numerous, among which are unemployment, poverty, growing demand for the meat of wild animals (and thus, the existence of the market), demographic growth, development of logging on a large scale and ignorance, among others.

The bushmeat trade takes on enormous proportions throughout all Central Africa. In all the markets of the large urban centers such as Libreville, Yaoundé, Bata, Bangui, Kinshasa, Brazzaville, Pointe Noire, Malabo, or Douala, bushmeat is openly and consistently sold, whatever the season, despite its illegality. The quantities are disturbing and sufficiently illustrate the problem. In Pointe Noire, second largest city and economical capital of the Congo, a study carried out in 1996 (PROGECAP) estimated that 150,000 metric tons of bushmeat is consumed annually. It is certain that the current rate is now double. Libreville, capital of Gabon, receives daily shipments of bushmeat by railway. About 1,200 metric tons of bushmeat flows into the markets of Libreville daily. Bangui consumes about 120,000 metric tons of bushmeat yearly; Bata, second largest city of Equatorial Guinea, daily offers a gruesome spectacle in its central market where transport vehicles bring piles of the whole animal carcasses of all species. All the species are impacted and some are threatened with extinction, notably the large animals such as duikers,

gorillas, chimpanzees, and elephants.

Everywhere in Central Africa, the bushmeat trade has become a true scourge that threatens the survival of several wildlife species and is of greatest conservation concern. The scarcity of game around some forest towns forces the inhabitants to leave. Networks of well equipped and well organized poachers empty the forests using Kalashnikov rifles to feed the urban centers, penalizing the village populations that essentially depend on bushmeat for their survival. Suddenly there is a food security problem at the village level, necessitating the use of more costly hunting methods that most villagers cannot afford. Some villagers are obliged to constantly roam in search of a better life in urban areas or forestry concessions. Although illegal in most countries of the region, the bushmeat trade is expanding, with the governments lacking the capacity to enforce the laws. The international community is being summoned. The Central African countries need international support to fight against this scourge that not only is decimating their wildlife heritage, but is also dangerous threat to the life of the forest peoples, notably the Pygmies. The bushmeat trade kills the wildlife and the village.

The problem is complex, and the solutions cannot be found solely in classic conservation approaches. It is necessary, therefore, that new management strategies take into account traditional and long-forgotten knowledge; a return to traditional management seems inevitable. The participative management concept could be improved while taking into account the traditional values of forest peoples.

Important efforts are underway in the region at the political level, including the establishment of consultative frameworks. The CEFDHAC (Conference on the Ecosystems of Dense and Humid Forests of Central Africa), COMIFAC (the Conference of the Ministers in charge of the Forests of Central Africa), and the success of the Yaoundé Declaration are illustrations of regional political will. Nevertheless, the governments of the countries of this region do not have the means to deal with this scourge. International support would be most welcome.

This political will is now augmented by the CITES Bushmeat Working Group [Appendix A] (CITES BWG), set up by Decision 11.166 of the Conference of the Parties to CITES in Nairobi Kenya in April 2000. The CITES BWG brings together all the Directors of the Central African Region, and their support staff, who are in charge of wildlife management and protected areas. Since its inception, this group has met several times with assistance of the international community, notably the Government of the United Kingdom, the United States, through the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and the Bushmeat Crisis Task Force (BCTF). An action plan was developed and is being executed with funding of \$135,000, obtained by the BCTF from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. This financing, along with support from USAID's Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE), is being used to execute the action plan and also permits the installation of a Regional Coordinator based in Yaoundé, Cameroon.

The BCTF closely collaborates with the CITES BWG and is helping to find additional funds from international sources, as it is now an international problem. It is not unusual to find African bushmeat in the restaurants of certain capitals such as London, Brussels, New York, and Washington. Well organized distribution networks allow the feeding of far-flung international markets. The airlines that link Africa to the West play a very important role in this traffic. Just some months ago, I flew on an Air France flight from Brazzaville to Paris. To my surprise, I saw some passengers hurrying to embark with their accompanied luggage: suitcases full of bushmeat and of smoked freshwater fish, within the full view and knowledge of the customs officers that gladly helped to close the suitcases after their

« inspection ». The practice takes place in almost all the airports of Central Africa. The domestic airlines that connect large urban centers to the internal cities carry large quantities of bushmeat, as do other means of transport such as trains and boats. This situation is serious and demands the special attention of the international community.

#### TRADITIONAL MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES.

To make a shift from classic conservation theory, we want here to focus on traditional management of the natural resources. In fact before and during the colonial period, the people of Africa had established natural resource management systems based on the respect of mythological beliefs. Every activity linked to the use of natural resources followed precise rules. It was not anarchical, but instead disciplined and respectful of established order. The system worked well, it did not need law enforcement agents to assure respect for the rules because they were inviolable. Mankind treated nature with care because we were conscious that our survival depended on it. The use of natural resources was essentially for subsistence. Vital activities such as hunting, fishing, and cutting large trees in the forest were well regulated and often subjected to rituals.

**Traditional Hunting and Fishing:** Traditional hunting was practiced for a long time for subsistence and was subject to rules that varied from one ethnic group to another. With the Bantu-speaking peoples of Central Africa, for example, every clan or ethnic group had a territory or well delimited zone used for hunting. Access and hunting could not take place without the authorization of the traditional chief. A quota system existed by species and included some forbidden prey species. The belief was that spirits protected certain forbidden species, the taboos and other myths created beliefs surrounding them were inviolable barriers.

Respect for tradition was severe. Species such as the leopard, bongo antelope, Nile crocodile, elephant, and the hippopotamus, to name a few, were revered by most of the tribes in Central Africa, and often were animals totemic or emblematic in the Bantu culture. Also, big game hunts were only practiced for special occasions. Killing an elephant, for example, took place with an agreement between neighboring villages or clans. With the tribe of the « Kouyous » in the north of the Republic of the Congo (Brazzaville), one organized a festival of folk dances and demonstrations of strength during a week before the elephant hunting party. The hunters were chosen among the elite of the town and then were prepared. For a full week they received spiritual blessings that protected them against the forces of the evil. Only after all these formalities did the hunters enter the forest to confront an elephant. The clan chiefs accompanied them at the end of the hunt to give them some final blessings. Every hunter carried with him a full measure of provisions and protection of amulets (talismans) and three to four previously-prepared and blessed spears of mystical strength. It was then that hunters began the long march tracking elephants. A large bull elephant « Kamba » was sought. Once the tracks were found, he was followed to the end. The endowed hunters were able to make themselves invisible « Indzombi » and approached the beast and finally pierced him in vital areas with their well sharpened spears, before disappearing into the forest and again reappearing in a place that was identified in advance. After reappearing, they returned to the assault by following the blood tracks and killing the animal if it has withstood the first attack. This process could repeat itself as much as necessary.

The parties hunting small game were organized in forms of a collective between the inhabitants of a village or of neighbors, who used nets, traditional weapons such as spears, lances, harpoons, and hunting dogs. The meat was distributed freely among the inhabitants of the town, with every family receiving its share, however small it was.

Although prized by most of the Africans, bushmeat is a commodity that was not consumed daily. It constituted an exceptional meal and was often reserved for special occasions (family gatherings, initiation ceremonies, festivals of traditional dances, etc.). Twenty years ago, this was practiced in most villages of the region. Even after advent of firearms at Independence, the tradition always was respected. The names of the possessors of firearms was known in every town. The use of these weapons was verified and monitored. Every weapon that entered the forest was only authorized to take a quota established by the chief. The arm owner could only sell the part that was surplus to his need. Bushmeat was not marketed but was consumed only inside the hunting territory.

I remember during my youth in northern Congo, that my grandfather, with the name of notable Agnagna, was customary chief of the region of « Loko » in the area of Owando (Fort Rousset). The notable Agnagna was a powerful and respected traditional chief that embodied the life of the inhabitants of Loko. It was he who gave the order to hunt, and it was to him that all hunters had to present the rewards of the hunt before any meat was eaten. He received the right hind leg and the trophy (horns, skins or head). The trophies were collected and kept in a sacred place where access was uniquely reserved to the initiated. A fire was lit there in permanence for the conservation of the trophies. The trophies were exposed during period ceremonies and served to inventory the number of game hunted during a given period. It was also a customary heritage and symbol of strength.

The largest collection of trophies that I saw in my youth belonged to a big chief of the tribe of the « Kouyous » by the name of « Etoumbakoundou ». He lived in a village called Kouyougandza situated downstream of the city of Owando (former Fort Rousset) on the river Kouyou. This collection included pieces of very big value of which the dimensions were almost always records: antelope horns, leopard skins and those of other animals, hippo teeth, cranes and cane cats, feathers of rare bird, and elephant tusks. The notable Etoumbakoundou uniformly received visits from white settlers (colonial administrators) and a few tourists. The visitors' interest in the trophies led them to take one or more before leaving. I remember in 1963, when one of the last colonial administrators, whose name escapes me, the Commander of the Prefecture of Likouala-Mossaka, visited Kouyougandza. He left with a gigantic pair of elephant tusks. Six men were necessary to lift each tusk, whose weight may have reached 120 kilograms. The boat used by the Commander could not bear the weight of the tusks, and some passengers had to be left out and later transported on a second trip.

I was greatly disappointed to note that at the time of my passage to Kouyougandza in 1986, that all of the trophies had disappeared after the death of the Chief Etoumbakoundou in 1974. An entire culture had disappeared.

Fishing in freshwater was also seasonal. For example, the draining of ponds for fish followed a ritual. During the dry season of 1965, I witnessed the draining of a pond called « Etsibi » in the zone of « Loko » under the authority of the notable Agnagna. In fact, the Etsibi Pond had a diameter of approximately 50 meters, and it articulated with the Kouyou River through a small canal that dried in dry season. « Etsibi » was forbidden to visit in period of the high waters. In it lived a large Nile crocodile that only the Chief Agnagna could observe.

Baskets were used to drain the pond, and men, women, and children of the villages surrounding « Ossambou » camped around Etsibi during the event. Before the draining of the pond, a ritual was conducted in which Chief Agnagna struck the surface of the water with a stick and ordered the gigantic

crocodile to leave. One could see this 6-meter long monster leave the pond and head toward the Kouyou River using the canal. After this, the spectacle began. The quantity of fish collected was enormous. The fish was smoked to conserve it for future needs. This is an example of the manner used by one tribe to manage their natural heritage. The efficiency of this traditional form of management was clearly established.

Unfortunately this effective type of management, adapted to the African context, was rejected under the pretence of modernity or economic development. Now modern conservation laws have shown their limits and cannot alone solve the problem of the management of natural resources in Central Africa. The customary knowledge that has been long forgotten merits revival.

## CURRENT SITUATION

The problem of managing forest resources in Central Africa gives rise today to several questions. The economies of most countries of the region are supported either by oil or forest exploitation. Logging constitutes the first or second source of income to most of the countries of the region. For example, in Gabon, where oil reserves are being exhausted, the plan is to then exploit the forest resources for wood. The policy is to develop a logging industry, which is considered a means of development. Nevertheless, questions can be posed about the effect this policy will have upon gross national product and on local human populations who are dependent on the forest.

In Central Africa almost all the logging companies are foreign owned. They cut and sell the wood on the international market while paying derisory taxes to the national government. Wood is given up almost free of charge, while logging companies do not conduct reforestation procedures. The logging methods are devastating. Some speak of selective cutting that consists of exploiting only the largest trees with the highest commercial value. In the northern Congo for example, the most sought-after species is of the genus *Entandophragma* (Sipo and Sapeli). It is not unusual to see a road of several kilometers cut for a single sapeli tree. In the process, dozens of other trees may be destroyed. The damage to the flora and fauna are huge. As for the village communities, they seem to enjoy a short-lived well being as long as there are desirable trees to cut. After that, they are left alone in a state of abject poverty.

We can include some other negative effects of logging. The prospection teams and other workers essentially nourish themselves with bushmeat. The forest roads and the wood transport vehicles carry all sorts of forest products including elephant ivory, animal skins and bushmeat. The logging work sites are transformed into immense cities wherein thousands of people reside. Merchants of all kinds spring up because of the workers' salaries. Basic goods are sold in small shops. But behind the counters, merchants disregard the law and traffic in wildlife products such as ivory and leopard skins.

In Pokola, northern Congo, for example, in a worksite created by the logging company CIB (Industrial Congolese Wood), the bushmeat trade is very well developed. Despite the strong local demand, large quantities of bushmeat are transported out of the country, notably to the neighboring Cameroon. Professional poachers install themselves alongside the forest roads and quietly operate with the complicity of the drivers of logging vehicles, who bring the illegal bushmeat to distant markets. All the species are slaughtered without restriction, the large game is preferred as it yields more profit. Even the species once protected by local taboos and beliefs such as the Bongo antelope, are poached. In the Pokola bushmeat market, one can daily find meat of almost all species of forest animals. The taboo myth was shattered with the intermingling of cultures among people who arrived in the area to work for

the loggers.

Logging plays a very important role in growth of the illegal bushmeat trade and constitutes a serious threat to wildlife. The forest roads open for removal of logs are used by the poachers to reach game-rich areas that were previously inaccessible. In northern Congo near the border with the Central African Republic in the zone Enyele, where the logging company called ITBL operates, large camps of Central African poachers are installed in permanent camps. They illegally hunt and traffic bushmeat to feed the markets of Mbaiki and Bangui in the Central African Republic. It should be noted that the CAR once had forests rich in wildlife, but it has apparently been destroyed by the bushmeat trade. Central African hunters now focus on Congo as a source of game.

Former soldiers of the army of former Zairean President Mobutu Sese Seko have hidden arms in the villages downstream of Bangui and of Nzongo (in the DRC). These stocks of munitions and arms are now used for poaching. These ex-soldiers have become professional poachers and operate on well organized circuits, and in certain cases, supported by the Central African Waters and Forests agents. Elephant poaching is very common in this zone, and their meat is sold in the CAR or elsewhere. The Central African Waters and Forests agents extract an unofficial tax that varies between 1,000 to 2,000 French CFA (\$2 to 3\$ US) on every 50 kg bag of elephant meat that is then freely sold in the markets of Bangui, despite the elephant's protected legal status.

The present situation is catastrophic in all the countries of the Central African region. Tons of bushmeat are sold daily on the markets of the big urban centers. In Bata, Equatorial Guinea for example, the daily bushmeat market contains hundreds of baboons piled up for sale. It is estimated that residents of neighboring Libreville, Gabon consume more than 350,000 metric tons of bushmeat each year.

In witnessing this, one wonders if the Central African countries have game laws. In fact, some of them have very good laws on paper, although other countries need considerable revisions. However, none of them effectively regulate the commerce of bushmeat, and it is sold openly under the eyes of the authorities whose job it is to control the illegal trade.

## WHY THE FOREST INHABITANTS OF CENTRAL AFRICA CONSUME BUSHMEAT

As previously noted, the climatic and ecological conditions of the humid tropical forest are hostile to raising cattle, and native people are obligated to rely on protein from the forests and rivers. Over several generations, myths, traditions, and a cultural preference for bushmeat grew among the inhabitants of the forest. These days, almost every family has some chickens. But poultry is used for the reception of special guests or saved for special ceremonies. Families prefer eating bushmeat.

Therefore, there is a problem caused by people's food preference. Bushmeat often is considered as of better quality by its consumers, and this seems justified if one considers the low fat content of game meat. Still, the recent epidemics of Ebola or HIV/AIDS may originate from the contact between humans and hunted animals. This situation raises many questions: When did the bushmeat problem first appear? Was it not the appearance of modernization? Did not the ancestors live in harmony with nature? What does one say to the pygmies who have always lived in the forest? Did they know of the problems of HIV and other pathologies of the modern world? And what of the forest, wasn't it a holy place before the penetration of machines and other arsinals used to exploite her resources? Will

bushmeat have to be forbidden for consumption? What alternatives are there for the people of the forest to eat? The answers to these questions will edify the approach to developing solutions to the bushmeat problem.

The peoples of the forest always kept their food habits even when they migrated far from their region of origin. Most of the urban centers of the region are populated by rural migrants who have not abandoned their habits. Even in the city they have a tendency to keep their original food preferences such as bushmeat in the forest zone, and grasshoppers, caterpillars and other in savannah zones). Suddenly illegal dealings in forest products began developing (bushmeat, fruit and wild vegetables, palm wine etc.) from the country towards the city. At the start it was simply a matter of small quantities for family usage, but this new type of city-dwellers whose purchasing power was growing with employment found in the city began passing larger orders. The existing market and the increased requests provoked an unprecedented explosion of commerce of wild products, bushmeat in particular. It was more or less in the same manner that bushmeat found its place in the exotic restaurants of western cities.

## THE SOLUTIONS

The bushmeat crisis in Central Africa is a daily preoccupation regarding management and conservation of the forest resources in the region. All the actors, at the political level, administrative, scientific and private became aware of the seriousness of the problem and are working hard to look for solutions which will minimize impacts. In all the regional forums treating biodiversity conservation questions bushmeat is always central to the discussion. As was expressed, political will to find solutions to the management problems of the forest resources is evident in the region. Some encouraging regional initiatives include CEFDHAC, the COMIFAC and the reformation of OCFSA (Organization for the Conservation of the Wildlife in Africa). Nevertheless this political will is far from realizing its financial and equipment needs. The recommendations and other suggestions for solutions resulting from these discussions have barely begun to be implemented.

One action which is taking place as was mentioned previously is the CITES Bushmeat Working Group. Approved by the CITES Secretariat in April 2000 this group has developed a five point action plan and has secured the basic funds to operate a central office with support from National Bushmeat Officers. The five priority actions of this group, represented by the directors of wildlife and protected areas from all Central Africa are: to review policy and legislation in the region with reference to bushmeat and establish a harmonization of this legislation for the region; create a region-wide public awareness campaign regarding the impacts of the illegal, commercial bushmeat trade and impacts on cultural heritage; develop a bushmeat trade monitoring system in conjunction with the CITES/MIKE (Monitoring Illegal Killing of Elephants); establish a regional approach to wildlife management and bushmeat control in logging concessions; and provide training and capacity building to bushmeat officers, ministry personnel, and law enforcement agents regarding the bushmeat trade. Base funding for this initiative has been secured and a reauthorization of the group will be submitted at the next Conference of the Parties in Santiago, Chile, November 2002.

It is important to note that the approach taken by this group is not to forbid the consumption of bushmeat for those who actually need it but rather to increase strategies of sustainable use while developing alternate protein and income sources for local populations. It will be important to eliminate the commercial aspect of this trade and its impacts on wildlife populations.

To attain this objective, there are needs for more time and resources than the CITES Bushmeat Working



Group alone has available; the international community is called upon to collaborate with African nations to address this crisis. The current dimension of the bushmeat crisis surpasses the regional context and is indeed continental, the solutions to the problem cannot be found without a collaborative effort of the international community.

## **APPENDIX A: CITES BUSHMEAT WORKING GROUP SUMMARY INFORMATION**

The CITES Bushmeat Working Group was recommended in Document 11.44 and approved [Decision 11.166\*] in Nairobi, Kenya in April 2000 at the 11<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP) for the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

The Working Group includes Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo (Brazzaville), Equatorial Guinea and Gabon and incorporates these countries as the case study region for underpinning the scope of work and possible solutions for the bushmeat crisis. It also includes a wider range of dissemination group countries, including: Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Republic of Guinea (Conakry), Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Sierra Leone, Togo, Zambia.

The primary objectives of the CITES BWG are to:

- Set the scope of problems relating to bringing national and cross-border bushmeat issues into the context of a sustainable and legal process;
- Work on identifying solutions that address the scope of problems;
- Facilitating the implementation process in achieving the solutions.

The CITES BWG held its first meeting in Douala, Cameroon in January 2001 where they set forth a scope of work and identified priority actions for the group. The US Fish and Wildlife Service supported a meeting of the members of the core working group along with representatives from dissemination group and donor countries during a special session of the BCTF Collaborative Action Planning Meeting in May 2001 where opportunities for collaboration between BCTF and the CITES BWG were identified.

The CITES BWG held a second formal meeting in Cameroon in July 2001 where they established a framework for their priority actions, which formed the basis of a joint BCTF – CITES BWG funding proposal approved by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. With support from a USAID grant, the BCTF will again be providing an opportunity for the CITES BWG members to meet at the École de Faune de Garoua [Garoua Wildlife College] in March 2002 during the bushmeat curriculum development workshop co-organized by the college and BCTF. During this meeting the CITES BWG will set forth the framework for a three-year implementation plan for the joint proposal funded by the MacArthur Foundation to include planning for: policy and legislation review, training for bushmeat monitoring and database development, review of wildlife management authority structures, public awareness campaigns in Central Africa, and developing wildlife management guidelines within logging concessions. As a result of the funding from the MacArthur Foundation bushmeat officers in each of the six core countries and a regional coordinator will be supported for the next three years. Matching funds to fulfill the CITES BWG efforts are being supplied by the US Fish and Wildlife Service through a grant from CARPE [Central African Regional Programme for the Environment, USAID] and the UK Wildlife Management Authority.

The CITES BWG has made excellent progress toward developing regular communication among wildlife and protected area directors from the six core countries of the Central Africa region. Having secured

funding for priority activities they will be able to develop databases regarding trade in bushmeat, harmonize legislation related to wildlife exploitation and trade, collate information for a regional perspective on bushmeat trade, and raise awareness among the general public in Africa regarding the consumption and exploitation of wildlife. These steps will culminate in a set of recommended solutions that can be 'willingly implemented by range states'.

Decision 11.166 Available from: [<http://www.cites.org/eng/decis/11/166.shtml>]

For more information contact:

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<sup>[1]</sup> This testimony has been translated into English from an original French document